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Fashion's
freshest looks

Road map for 2012



Delegates to the National People's Congress (NPC) learned Monday that the government has lowered its GDP growth target to less than 8 percent.

The news sent the Shanghai Stock Exchange spiraling, but experts say it is a sign that China is serious about extending the benefits of its economic miracle to the greater populace.

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Oklahoma! in Beijing!

Beijing Playhouse is gearing up for its biggest production yet: *Oklahoma!*

The musical will challenge 30 local thespians who must master its demanding songs, dances and accents.



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Ages united in art

China's foremost artistic family is preparing for its first group exhibition in Singapore.

Tea maniac
treks ancient
trade route

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Free service
for many
appliances

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Cartoon artist
a symbol of
generation

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Film a fresh
look at rural
Germany

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Delegates meet to plan 2012

What matters most at the annual sessions?

The annual meetings of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the National People's Congress (NPC) – popularly called the “Two Sessions,” or “lianghui” – are underway in Beijing.

Although stability is expected to remain the most discussed topic, it may be the other issues facing the world's second-largest economy that are more worthy of attention.



Delegates meet in the Great Hall of the People to share development ideas for 2012.

Feng Li/Getty Images/CFP Photo

The 10-day gathering of NPC and CPPCC at the Great Hall of the People began Monday with a “state of the nation” address from Premier Wen Jiabao, who outlined the government's priorities for 2012.

Reforming and tuning the economy will remain the top priority as the country continues its development during the 12th Five-Year Plan, Wen said.

Wen promised to protect farmers' rights to their land. “China should not sacrifice the health of its people for economic development,” he said.

New ministry to manage oceans

In order to strengthen enforcement of maritime law and exploration on the high seas, the country needs to establish a Ministry of Oceans, said Chen Mingyi, a member of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC.

“The State Oceanic Administration is not strong enough to enforce the law,” Chen said. “We should sharpen our oceanic strategy just as we have our aerospace industry.”

The Oceanic Administration is attached to the Ministry of Land and Resources.

Chen said all great nations in modern history have been naval powers, and that the country needs to enhance its maritime strength to safeguard its interests in and accelerate development of its claimed sea territory, an area of 3 million square kilometers.

The state oceanic commission would involve representatives from the economy, military, diplomacy, science and technology and law enforcement sectors, Chen said.

Marrying at 18

Huang Xihua, an NPC deputy, put forward a suggestion to allow both men and women who have reached the age of 18 to marry. Under current law, women can marry at 20 and men 22.

“The Marriage Law of 1980 has spurred social problems such as an increasing number of leftover singles, late mothers and cohabitating youth,” Huang said.

“Lowering the minimum age of marriage will protect the health of women and children and promote prenatal and postnatal care,” Huang said.

“The lowering is not to encourage

couples to marry at a young age, but 18-year-old adults should have the right to decide when they will marry,” he added.

A survey on Weibo.com of more than 17,000 respondents found that 43.2 percent supported the motion and 42.7 percent opposed.

Voices from overseas

A political adviser from Hong Kong proposed allowing overseas Chinese to sit in on the “Two Sessions” as non-voting participants and to submit their comments and suggestions in English rather than in Chinese only.

Anna Sohmen Pao, honorary president of the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, said China needs to leverage the experience of overseas Chinese to advance its position in the international arena.

“However, some of these Chinese are not proficient at speaking or writing Chinese as they were born or educated overseas,” said Pao, a member of the CPPCC.

“To allow English to be used during the NPC and CPPCC sessions will attract more young overseas Chinese to pay attention to Chinese issues,” Pao said.

Sidelights

What you wear matters

Thirty female lawmakers and political advisers from Zhejiang Province abandoned their plans to wear qipao to the opening of the annual parliamentary session Monday morning.

Their plan to show up in the traditional gowns instead of business suits was announced Sunday by media outlets in the province.

Most deputies and delegates to the annual sessions wear formal suits except for those representing ethnic minorities.

However, a number of deputies and delegates have chosen to wear something different during the past several years. Their less conventional attire is usually met with scorn.

Most of the Zhejiang delegation said that such “innovative” dress would be improper for the formal occasion. Dissenters said it could add some flair to the female participants' style.

“It's hard to tell whether they were elected to handle political affairs or to appear on a catwalk at a fashion show,” read a Weibo microblog post by Linqi99. The comment was forwarded 27,000 times as of Monday morning.

Many also posted asking who would be paying for the expensive silk clothes.

Similar concerns were raised when deputies were spotted wearing luxury goods and expensive jewelry. Many critics said they expected their representatives to keep a more humble profile.

The boom in social networking services and microblogging has opened up personal information about deputies and delegates to unprecedented public scrutiny.

(Xinhua/Beijing Today)

The third eye

Keeping up on the Web

A growing number of lawmakers and political advisers have opened real-name Sina Weibo accounts to stay in touch with the country's 260 million microbloggers.

The following are highlights from their microblogs, which have been quite active during the annual sessions.

Boosting domestic consumption

There is going to be a new 4-trillion-yuan stimulus plan. In order to urge consumption, the government plans to appropriate 4 trillion yuan from the revenue of state-owned enterprises to issue vouchers to citi-

zens during the next two years.

– Wang Tian, an NPC deputy and chairman of the electronics maker Bubugao Group

Raising the average income

Last year, it was proposed that we look to property markets as a way to increase the average income.

Although that's not a bad idea, it had few practical results. The stock and real estate markets can rapidly generate wealth, but few people have the resources to take advantage of them.

In practice, most people fail to profit in the stock market and they never have enough money to purchase real estate. In the countryside, it's even worse since

people cannot even take out a loan against their land to play the market.

– Wu Zhongxin, a political adviser and economist from Hunan Province

Training vital for graduates

The employment of university graduates is a persistent, knotty issue.

I think one of the most effective solutions would be to give them more chances to gain extracurricular training. I strongly recommend schools make job training a compulsory course and provide professional guidance to students who are seeking work.

– Li Dongsheng, an NPC deputy and chairman of TCL

Growth or distribution?

Country slows GDP to restructure economy

By Huang Daohen

Representatives attending the National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference face a tough decision: should the nation focus on generating wealth or spreading it?

For more than a decade, the country has maintained a GDP growth rate of 8 percent or more. But the new lower target of 7.5 percent could signal that government is preparing to shift its focus from generating wealth to enduring a more equitable distribution of it.

On Monday, Premier Wen Jiabao said final announcements of the nation's direction will be postponed until later in the sessions.

Could a drop in GDP sentence the Chinese economy to a hard landing?

The country lowered its gross domestic product (GDP) growth target for the first time on Monday after maintaining stable growth of 8 percent or more for the last seven years.

"The major targets for this year's national economic and social development are to increase GDP by around 7.5 percent and to create 9 million jobs throughout our towns and cities," Premier Wen Jiabao said in his government work report.

The report, one of the most important documents revealed at the meetings, discussed administrative guidelines for politics, economics, society and culture.

"Lowering the GDP growth target is intended to guide all sectors to focus their work on transforming their pattern of economic development, to improve their quality and to pursue longer-term, sophisticated development," Wen said.

The sudden cut surprised many and caused a tumble in the stock markets. The Shanghai Stock Exchange plunged 34.5 points to settle at 2,410.45 on Tuesday.

However, Erin Yao, an analyst at the local consulting firm Qingxue Market Research, said the adjustment was not unexpected and was in line with the nation's macroeconomic goals.

Yao said that GDP growth has already



China is cutting its goal for GDP growth to 7.5 percent to boost development quality.

CFP Photos



Premier Wen Jiabao speaks at the NPC session.

slowed. Last year, the country's GDP growth slowed to 9.2 percent, down from 10.3 percent in 2010.

"A slightly lower target is reasonable," Yao said.

Inflationary pressures have created many hidden bubbles in markets such as real estate. "If the government did not make such an adjustment, the risk would be even greater," Yao said.

In his report, the premier set an inflation target of less than 4.0 percent this year, amid fears that rising prices will increase social unrest.

Official statistics show that in 2011, the country's consumer price inflation (CPI) held steady at 5.4 percent, well above the government's target of 4.0 percent and the 2010 rate of 3.3 percent.

Labor shortage may be another consequence of a rising CPI, as the increased costs may deter rural migrants from working in the cities.

"Finding a way to balance the rich and poor will be the next big challenge," Yao said.

But the cut does not mean all provinces will see a drop in their GDP. The effects will be felt differently across each region, Yao said.

The inland province of Guizhou, for example, saw GDP growth of 14 percent last year – exceeding many of the coastal provinces. Hubei Province had a projected growth rate of 13.8 percent, while growth in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was projected to reach 13 percent.

The country's western interior, a historically poor area, has seen the highest growth, Yao said, attributing it to government policies intended to support growth in the region.

The well-off east coast, which experienced decades of rapid development, will have to change its focus from making money to ensuring personal well-being.

"I think that is what the cut signals – local government can't narrowly focus on GDP figures. It has to consider whether or not the people are happy with their lives," Yao said.

The third eye

Betting on consumers

The country may have lowered its economic growth rate target, but this doesn't mean that China is en route to become the next Greece.

With the country's growing willingness to focus on economic stability and promote domestic consumption, products in the appliance, service and energy-saving industries are becoming safe bets, said Wen Yijun, an analyst at Oriental Securities in Beijing.

"The country will move on to a new stage of growth for its economy. Investors should be looking at companies that will target the masses – the Chinese consumers," Wen said. "That will be the next big transition."

Consumer spending accounts for 35 percent of the nation's GDP. By comparison, it accounts for 70 percent of the US' GDP.

Wen said China Unicom, one of the main mobile phone operators, is one example of a safe bet.

The operator offers voice, Web and data services. "The company has a strong user base that is getting wealthier," Wen said.

Wen was also positive about the automakers Chery and Geely, which build small cars that young consumers can afford.

International companies that provide daily consumer products may be similarly safe investments.

"Consumers will continue buying products from big brand names because there is a growing demand for quality products from recognizable brands," Wen said.

Market analysis

Could a slowing China affect the world?

Annual GDP growth of 8 percent used to be seen as essential for the country's economy.

Many predicted that if the government failed to meet this target, China would suffer a hard landing and take the global economy down with it.

But London economists Steve Tsang and Gerard Lyons said such worries are groundless, Reuters reported.

They said a slowing Chinese economy would promote global economic balance.

"The Chinese government and economists outside China have been saying the economy needs to be rebalanced. It's blatantly obvious. Well, if you're serious about rebalancing you'd expect growth to slow down a bit," Tsang said.

The 7.5 percent figure should be viewed as a point of reference rather than a forecast, he said.

Gerard Lyons, chief economist at Standard Chartered Bank in London, said even if China slows, it does so from

a high base.

In 2007, when GDP grew by 14.2 percent, output increased by a nominal 4.95 trillion yuan. By last year, when growth slowed to 9.2 percent, output remained at 7.36 trillion yuan.

"Considering the base, 7.5 percent growth would still be extraordinarily strong," Lyons said.

"[The number] is a signal intended to lower expectations and create space for structural reforms," he said.

Tea-obsessed Canadian shares his stories of the Tea Horse Road

By Wu Hao

Canadian Jeff Fuchs is fond of mountains and tea, so much so that he may well be the first foreigner from a Western country to travel the 5,000-kilometer Tea Horse Road, a legendary trade route connecting the provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan, Tibet and parts of India and Bangladesh.

On March 1, Fuchs shared his experiences at a Capital M literary festival event.

Two necessities: mountains and tea

Fuchs has lived in Asia for the past decade and done work related to indigenous mountain culture, oral histories and tea.

Before coming to China, he spent a considerable time in Switzerland, where he developed his love for mountaineering. "Traveling in the mountains, every 5 minutes, you see something tremendous and you feel very small. You see how much space and how much silence [there is], and for me this is good," he said. "I'm not a city person. City people are just rushing for no reason."

Fuchs said he prefers tea to coffee because he didn't come from a coffee-drinking family.

"My father had tea in the house from a very early age," Fuchs said. "The culture of tea is special. I think for me it's the earth's one pure medicinal drink. There is so much culture attached to tea that you need time to learn about it."

"I prefer Yunnan's tea culture because it's so simple, you don't need a fancy teapot," he said. "It is less words, less speaking, and more understanding of what makes this tea so good."

In 2003, a friend from Taiwan told him that Yunnan was a very special, ethnically diverse place, and that – most importantly – it had mountains and tea. Fuchs came with that in mind.

Old tales along the Tea Horse Road

Fuchs made his home in Shangrila in northwestern Yunnan at the eastern base of the Himalayas. Occasionally he led expeditions on behalf of Wild China, which sponsored him.

Most Chinese know about the Tea Horse Road, but few really understand its history and significance.

Fuchs learned about it when he met a 94-year-old woman who had lost her brother, uncle and father in a blizzard on the Tea Horse Road.

"These faces truly represent more of the Tea Horse Road than the maps," Fuchs said.



Fuchs sits amid an ancient tea tree forest near Nannuo Mountain in southern Yunnan with one of his many tea masters.

He found, in his exploration, that the tea road was actually more like a migratory route encoded in people's DNA—a route of language, culture and blood.

"One of the aspects that is so beautiful about the Tea Horse Road is it opens access to some of the most isolated communities on the planet," he said.

For example, he met a girl named Lama who wore stone jewels that her mother and grandmother collected from traders from Lhasa.

He also discovered that some people on the route spoke dialects unique to the plateau.

What surprised him most was the similarities between the people in these areas and

South American aborigines.

"I actually shot film of Indians, so we turned the sound down and showed them to the Tibetans, and they said these are the exact things we do – it's not just the facial features, it's the hats, it's the way that they've been bred, and the music," Fuchs said.

"As soon as I turned the volume up and voices started coming out, you could see [their surprise]: everything is familiar except the language."

Fuchs also heard many touching stories, such as the one about a woman who fell in love with a Han trader who promised he would return to find her. He never did – because, as Fuchs later found out, he perished on the road.



A mere strip of a pathway deep in the Himalayas hints at the perils that traders and travelers faced on the Tea Horse Road.

late for the translator.

Fuchs said many of the traders on the route have always been illiterate, so that many of their stories, while interesting, aren't able to be preserved.

He met Dawa, a trader, in November 2011. "Dawa asked me what I was doing with this, and he was very angry that a Tibetan, Yi or Han wasn't telling the story," Fuchs said. "Why is a white guy [telling it], and why are so few people interested?"

When he wasn't traveling, Fuchs was very happy to be promoting Wild China.

"There is a surprising number of people who want to learn more about tea culture, this crazy frontier, this place in China," he said. "Some people say it's backwards, but I'd say it has more stories, and more people willing to tell those stories, because they have time."

Fuchs said as some parts of the route modernize, "I don't think they always know what they are losing."

"Sometimes our history is very selfish," Fuchs said about Western culture. "We don't understand anything unrelated to the West. But I think the Tea Horse Road is something we have to understand because of its huge influence across Asia and the Middle East."

Fuchs started a tea company that sources Pu'er tea, and he'll continue exploring the Tea Horse Road and develop new routes for Wild China.

"We are trying to document the old trade routes, create a route that foreigners and Chinese would like to travel, open this area out, do something different – not just Lijiang, Dali, but deeper into China," Fuchs said.

Photos provided by Jeff Fuchs

Challenges and speed bumps

Before Fuchs went to Yunnan, he spent half-year doing research.

"At the beginning, when I started, I thought I was learning a lot. As I traveled, I felt there was so much to take in that I had to empty myself [of that research] because I couldn't hold everything in my brain," he said. "At the end I felt like I had refilled with information. And at the end, I feel I've done a good thing, for my life, for the Tea Horse Road."

Language was a challenge, since every 15 kilometers there was a different dialect, but Fuchs managed to make his way by finding locals to trans-

Francophonie highlights French culture in China

By Xiong Tong

The 17th Francophonie Festival, a celebration of French-speaking cultures, will include more than hundred events, including films, concerts, lectures, exhibitions, reading programs and university competitions, in more than a dozen cities in China, ambassadors of French-speaking countries announced at a press conference last week.

All events are free to attend. Chinese translations are available at a majority of the events, particularly exhibitions and films.

As part of the Year of French Language in China, this year's festival aims to show the diversity of culture in French-speaking countries.

Film festival

The Francophonie Film Festival is held annually in March. Organized by the embassies of French-speaking countries and the Alliance Francaise network in China, it will take place in 15 cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Chongqing, Dalian,



Francophonie Festival aims to show the diversity of culture in French-speaking countries.

Photos from faguowenhua.com

Hangzhou, Jinan, Kunming, Nanjing, Qingdao, Shenyang, Tianjin, Wuhan and Xi'an.

All films are free and subtitled in Chinese, French and English.

The film festival in Beijing, which began on March 3, will continue until the end of the month at the Institut Francais de Chine, the Polish and Romanian embassies and the Alliance Francaise of Beijing.

Musical events

This year, the organizers are staging Mars En Folie (Crazy March), featuring a wide selection tunes, in nine cities.

In Beijing, the show will be at Yugongyishan on March 24.

In addition, the semifinals of the French Song Contest will be held on March 24 and 25 at Institut Francais de

Chine. Singers from colleges and universities will compete by singing French songs from the 1960s.

Literature

The topic of this year's literature festival is "intimate." Les Dix Mots (The Ten Words). Its are: ame (soul), autrement (differently), caractere (nature), chez (at), confier (to confide), histoire (story), naturel (natural),



penchant (fondness), songe (dream) and transports.

The events "Tell me, write me, perform me, ten words" and, "One me, several words" will be staged throughout this month at the French language departments of several universities, at the Alliances Francaises and the multimedia library of the Institut Francais de Chine.

Readings, play rehearsals and graphic design exhibitions will also take place in the multimedia library.

The annual Francophonie Festival is initiated by the embassies and observers of the International Organization of the Francophonie and relayed by Chinese associations and institutions.

For more information, please visit faguowenhua.com/francophonie.

Ireland cultural festival starts

By Han Manman

A two-week long Irish cultural and art feast has arrived. The sixth annual Beijing Irish festival, which began last week, includes more than 15 activities and performances, showcasing the best of Irish music, dance, song, visual art and literature.

Declan Kelleher, ambassador of Ireland to China, said the Beijing Irish festival will hopefully open a window of understanding into Ireland for more people in Beijing.

"Irish and Chinese people share a deep respect for culture and for tradition, and it's natural therefore that culture should play such an important role in the development of our bilateral relationship," the ambassador said.

Having been in China many years, Kelleher said he is impressed by this country's Chinese cultural and art education. He used the example of people writing calligraphy on the street or in the parks.

"That shows the strength of Chinese culture," he said.

One of the festival highlights is an exhibition called "Hidden Meanings." The embassy said this exhibition is a collaborative Irish-Chinese exhibition of 2D and



The Irish festival may open a window of understanding into Ireland for more people in Beijing. Photo provided by Ireland Embassy

3D art that investigates landscape in the context of culture and memory. The artists in this exhibition explore their own environments and investigate their significance on a personal and a social level.

"[Landscape] means the environment of cities, the backdrop of industry and the internalized map of a world we

carry inside our heads," Kelleher said. "Our personal landscape is often the map of underground trains, the route of our buses, the view from a car and the passageways of apartment blocks."

Another highlight is the Ciorras traditional Irish music concert at Bookworm next Tuesday.

Ciorras was formed in 2010 when, as part of a hit Irish TV series, Irish music maestro Donal Lunny invited eight young musicians to create a band with a fresh, unique sound in traditional Irish music. Based in Ireland, this band plays an assortment of instruments, including the fiddle, concertina, pipes, piano accordion, key-

boards, percussion, low-whistles and flute.

The festival will last until March 18. For a detailed festival schedule, visit embassyofireland.cn.

The Feile Shanghai Ireland Week 2012 will take place in Shanghai from March 10 to 18. More information can be found at feileshanghai.org.

Beijing Playhouse rehearses for biggest production ever, Oklahoma!

By Wu Hao

On February 26 and 27, more than 100 thespians – professional and amateur – made their way through the hutong to Mako Theater to audition for Beijing Playhouse's next production, the Broadway musical *Oklahoma!*

Described as the king of all Broadway musicals, this Rodgers and Hammerstein Pulitzer Prize-winning play also won an Oscar when it was turned into a major motion picture. It depicts a love story set to the backdrop of a high-spirited rivalry between farmers and cowboys.

The musical in Beijing will feature 30 singers and dancers and a crew of at least 80. And as the crew tells it, it will be an extravaganza full of challenges and opportunities.

The long road toward production

As the biggest musical in Beijing Playhouse's six-year history, founder Chris Verrill and his team have been preparing for the production for almost 18 months, driven by Verrill's enthusiasm and confidence.

"Beijing Playhouse will be the largest locally produced English theater in the history of China," he said.

Auditions were held in three parts, beginning with an introduction to the musical. Participants were taught a dance from the play and asked to present by group. After that they were split into two rooms to do a live read from a script or sing a song of their choice.

"Our cast is colorblind," Verrill said. "We care about their ability to act, sing and dance, and their ability to do those things in English."

Participants ranged from middle school to college students, and working professionals to retired elders.

Assistant director Karim Oyarzabal said they sought to fill 10 key roles with personable performers who express themselves naturally on stage.

"I've been to these kinds of plays before, but in a small scale," said Charlotte Han, a student from Beijing Foreign Language University. "Beijing Playhouse is more professional. I'm here just to have fun."

After callbacks on February 29, *Oklahoma!* held its first rehearsal last Sunday, with director David Peck – who came on board last December – at the helm.

Peck is "the most talented English-speaking director in the



An audition for Beijing playhouse's *Oklahoma!*

Photos provided by Beijing Playhouse



Most of the crew and performers have stage experience and enthusiasm for the musical.

whole of China," Verrill said.

Peck, who has two graduate degrees in theater, has performed and directed more than 100 plays. His fondness for *Oklahoma!* traces back to a previous production in which he played the lead role of Curly.

"There is a wonderful innocence about it which harkens back to a simpler time," he said. "I would love to reintroduce them to the high spirits, boundless confidence and exuberant energy which fueled America's accomplishments during the middle of the 20th century."

Like Peck, most of the crew and performers have stage experience and enthusiasm for the musical.

Curly will be played by Yoad Bar-Noy, a 27-year-old Israeli who graduated with a degree in theater and acting and was drawn to China by the language and culture.

Noy said he was very excited, but also acknowledged the challenge he faces.

"As a non-native English speaker, it is very challenging for me to play this role, for it is

not only my first time acting in English, but playing Curly and speaking in a southern American accent," he said.

But the director has confidence in him.

"Both of our leads have marvelous voices and a very engaging stage presence which will light up both the romantic and the playful elements of the script," Peck said.

Beth Kerzee, the musical director, said because many of the musical's performers are unfamiliar with the material, "their enthusiasm will bring a fresh and new interpretation to a tried and true musical gem."

Kerzee said she hopes their production will introduce more Beijingers to this musical.

Beijing Playhouse has reached out to locals, and they've employed social media – including Renren, Douban and Sina Weibo – to help.

Their efforts are paying off – more Chinese have been getting involved in Beijing Playhouse's productions, many of which feature English and Chinese subtitles. However chal-

lenges still exist.

Rising up to challenges

"Sometimes hundreds of people come, sometimes dozens, yet there are also times when only six of us show up, but we have to perform as usual," said Luna Xu, the production coordinator.

Xu said Beijing Playhouse's promotion has included handing out flyers to giving away free tickets to events. They organize a drama club workshop and after-school activities open to people of all ages.

Prices have also been a problem: 100 yuan is usually too much for a ticket for the average person who isn't acquainted with the theater. Beijing Playhouse has sponsors, such as the US embassy, but Verrill still has to constantly explore ways to keep the costs low.

Although Beijing Playhouse has been in China for nearly six years, the off-Broadway model is still quite new to Chinese theater, Verrill said.

"It's been a challenge to find places to use," he said. "This has been a business model in the US and Europe for hundreds of years – a combination of public support and ticket sales – but it's just recently begun in China. So doing a show that is aesthetically good and economically viable is always a challenge."

As for *Oklahoma!*, the challenge lies not just in the music. It's the dancing, too.

"The dance in *Oklahoma!* is a big challenge for the cast, as it requires them to dance in a number of different styles including musical the-

ater, ballet and contemporary as well as (demonstrate) influences from styles like ragtime and line dancing," said choreographer Emma Ginger.

"We have a very talented cast that has already started working hard on the dance, and one of the biggest parts of it is to make it look easy to the audience and also to show the audience how much the characters are enjoying dancing."

Having fun

Rex Chen, a Chinese actor, has been extremely impressed by the production team's professionalism.

"I have certainly not seen any amateur group so organized," he said. "Their planning and execution is professional and meticulous."

Chen said he was very pleased and excited to see groups like Beijing Playhouse provide opportunities for drama and musical lovers to see classic stories and perhaps perform in them.

"Bringing to life something that has been so enjoyable to many people from my home to a new culture is extremely rewarding," Kerzee said. "Also, seeing a concept or cultural idea through the eyes of someone new, from a different background, is also a valuable experience."

Xu agreed. Having been part of a volunteer crew for the last three years, she's been infected with a love for theater.

"Really, we do it because we love the performing arts," Verrill said.

Oklahoma! will be staged from May 18 to June 3, with daily rehearsals. For more information, see beijingplayhouse.com.

Free maintenance for household appliances

By Wu Tong

The Beijing Consumer Association is offering free maintenance for household appliances bought between now and May 31. The campaign covers the maintenance of seven categories of household appliances for 100,000 families in the city.

The categories include air conditioners, TVs, electric water heaters, kitchen ventilators, gas stoves, washing machines and refrigerators. The service includes safety inspections of these appliances' circuits and their work performance, as well as complete cleaning for air conditioner.

With a budget of 3 million yuan, the maintenance program has a staff of 2,000. Hou Enlong, the general manager at Beijing Suning Appliance, which is leading the project, said they can visit 1,000 households per day. People should call 400-8365-365 to make appointments.

Accidents caused by improperly installed or maintained household appliances have increased recently.

Dong Qing from Beijing



Air conditioners should be checked twice a year.

CFP Photo

Consumer Association said the program is to improve people's awareness of potential dangers in the house. More similar plans will be initiated in the future.

Zhang Wenfeng, general manager of Midea Beijing, said that though an air condition-

er's shelf life is eight to 10 years, few people are aware of their machine's need to be thoroughly cleansed at least twice a year. Otherwise, the machine will consume more electricity and may emit a foul odor.

Sunning Appliance said if it would repair appliances at

a 20 percent discount during the promotion period. After inspection, appliance checkers will provide consumers a copy of the appliance report.

If a part is faulty, customers should verify the identity of the appliance manufacturer, Sunning said.

Beijing Aquarium looks for student reporters



The Beijing Aquarium in Beijing Zoo has recently begun to recruit students interested in marine life and the environment to guide tourists and write stories.

Applications are open to anyone in fourth grade or above. After some basic training, students will introduce animals at the aquarium to visitors and promote a "green-life" concept. Their write-ups about the aquarium will be published in internal publications.

Beijing Aquarium

Where: Inside Beijing Zoo, 18 B Gao-liangqiao Xie Jie, Haidian District

Open: 9 am - 5 pm
Tel: 6217 6655

Photo by Jia Ting

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiyang@ynet.com

I live in Shunyi but would like to have a night out with friends at Sanlitun. We might hit the bars and drink, so we'll have to leave our car downtown and cab back. Do you know how much parking costs in that area?

It's 6 yuan per hour for basement parking, 10 yuan for the first hour and then 15 yuan per hour on the street. You can park your car on Sanlitun Road around by luxury hotel The Opposite House or along the Village North, where it costs 20 or 30 yuan per night. You can also negotiate with the guards.

My sofas are ugly and dirty. I don't want to wash the covers, but the sofas were in the apartment before I moved in. A friend in Shanghai said they found someone who came in, measured everything and covered all chairs and sofas for something ridiculously cheap, like 400 yuan (not including material). Do you know where I can find such a service in Beijing?

Some curtain, sheet or pillar fabric stores offer such a service. Prices depend on the fabric you choose. When a staffer comes to your house, he or she will bring several books of samples. There are vendors on the third floor of Yashow. You could also contact Xu Hanming, manager of Beijing Ai Ming Hua Textile Company (6417 9233).

Where can I get silk curtains? I'm looking for foreign designs rather than traditional Chinese ones.

Check out Jimei Furnishing. It is one of the biggest furnishing companies in Beijing, which provides customization and door-to-door service. You can find plenty of exquisite Western-style curtains. For more information, please visit jimei.com.cn or call at 8788 5588.

(By Wei Ying)

Art is a family tr



Xiao Feng & Song Ren

By Zhao Hongyi

From March 16 to April 1, one of China's foremost artistic families will hold a group exhibition in Singapore.

Tradition & Frontline - The Xiao Family will bring together the works of four family members that reflect art's development from revolutionary painting to contemporary performance.

The parents will bring their finest oil paintings from the anti-Japanese era, such as those of Dr. Norman Bethune from Canada and portraits of workers. The daughters will bring their performance rocks and installations, such as the radical *Dialogue*, *Sperm* and *Wedlock*, and *Boys & Girls* and *Game Paradise*.



Xiao Lu & Xiao Ge

Revolutionary parents

The China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province has a history stretching back 80 years.

It was the first contemporary art school in China when it was established in 1928 as the National Academy of Arts and trained many top artists during the last century.

Among them was Xiao Feng.

In 1943, when Japanese troops occupied the country, the young and rebellious Xiao called on his teenage friends to join the Communist army and started his career as an art officer.

Xiao was sent to the National Academy of Arts in Hangzhou in the early 1950s and graduated from the Repin Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Russia in the late 1950s.

The revolutionary artist returned to work in the academy in Hangzhou, eventually becoming its 10th president and serving from 1983 to 1996 – back when the school was still the Zhejiang Academy of Art.

His many oil paintings reflect hard years spent serving in the army.

"Xiao combines the traditional focus on atmosphere and background with oil painting techniques," said Zhu Pingfan, an art critic.

Song Ren, his wife, shared many of his early

life experiences. She was sent to study art at the Central Academy of Fine Arts' East China Branch in Hangzhou after 1949. She met Xiao Feng 11 years later.

Unsatisfied, but tolerant

When speaking about their daughters, the couple seems proud – albeit confused.

"Society is changing so quickly. We understand and tolerate many of the choices they've made and hope both excel in their own approach to art," Xiao said.

Their eldest daughter, Xiao Lu, was born in Hangzhou in 1962. She showed a rebellious spirit from the very beginning, long before she graduated from the China Academy of Art in 1988.

In 1989, while preparing her graduate work, Xiao Lu participated in the Exhibition of Chinese Contemporary Arts held at the China Art Museum in Beijing where she showed a performance piece called "Dialogue."

She placed two human-size boards in telephone kiosks so that they appeared to be trying to communicate. She then stepped back and opened fire on the boards with a gun as a way of demonstrating that any attempt at communication was useless.

Her performance brought police to the museum

and made headlines in both domestic and foreign media. It shocked many Chinese viewers who were unfamiliar with performance art and spawned a book explaining the meaning behind the form.

In 2009, Xiao Lu created "15 Shoots – From 1989 to 2003," emphasizing her rebellious spirit.

In the years between, Xiao Lu released the performance pieces *Sperm*, *Wedlock*, *What's Love* and *What's Feminism*, all of which challenged expectations.

"I think each time she presented a new work, our parents had another heart attack," said Xiao Ge, her younger sister. "They just couldn't accept the forms and themes of her art."

Now, Xiao Lu is continuing her performance works by drawing on conflicts and contradictions from deep in her heart.

She recently shaved her head as a way of drawing attention to the feminist cause. "Chinese women have been oppressed too long, and we should do something about it," she said.

Out of the limelight

Xiao Ge shares little of her sister's wild spirit.

Born in the early 1970s, she studied in France after graduating from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing.

She created a *Boys and Girls* series of children playing on

Later on, with *Boys and Girls* series, she was creating mixed media works, such as "Game Paradise," featuring teenage boys and three-dimensional

The piece is about identity after marriage, showing in foreign countries.

But Xiao Ge is more into art rather than an exhibition or

From 2005, she has been doing cultural exchange between countries.

In 2009, she was a media officer for the continental culture

When Xiao Ge found she had a talent for sketches, cartoon and professional tra

These talents would become a taste that took her i



Wedlock (Xiao Lu)



Love Letters (Xiao Lu)



Dialogue (Xiao Lu)

tradition



a series of stone carvings, her Boys of 1994, reflecting a group of children on a horizontal bar.

With more education, she began creating media works about life and reality, "Paradise," in which a group of children and girls play in a more complicated mental box.

about her frustrated concept of many years spent touring and studying in different countries.

She is more interested in promoting art than creating it. She prefers to work as an organizer and media coordinator.

In 2007, she organized a dozen exchanges between China and Europe.

She took a position as the Asia Pacific director for the ShContemporary, a trans-cultural exchange program.

When Ge was three years old, her parents noticed her talent for art. She made her own drawings and comic strips even without formal training.

This led her parents to believe she would be a great artist in the future. But her path went in a different direction.

When her mother learned that her daughter preferred to work as a coordinator in the art business rather than a creator, she was flabbergasted.

"Artists should be creating," Xiao said, reminding her that history remembers artists, not curators.

"I think it's too soon for me to be creating my own works," she said. "I wouldn't shut out the possibility that one day I may switch over to art when I get tired of working in marketing, but that day is not now."

"We are grateful for their guidance. They raised us and taught us to appreciate art," the daughters said. "They may not be satisfied with us or understand what we're doing, but they respect our decision."

"They have been rebellious as long as I can remember," Xiao Lu said.

"But we encouraged them to pursue art even though they were totally out of our control and expectations," he said.

"Still, we always try to remind them that art should reflect the true, the good and the beautiful aspects of life. What's most important is that artists must keep creating."



Hope in Lake (Xiao Feng)



Happy Moment in Fighting Days (Song Ren)



Photos provided by Xiao Sisters



Boys & Girls (Xiao Ge)



Boys & Girls (Xiao Ge, performance)



陈可

Chen Ke as drawn by Liu Ye

Chen Ke, born in 1978 in Sichuan Province, has a slight frame and fair skin – characteristics one would never associate with the powerful oration of her opening speech.

"With You – I'll Never Feel Lonely," named for her 2007 exhibition, includes more than 70 ink and wash pictures, as well as used equipment and past installations.

"We chose an old name for her new exhibition because that reflects the essence of Chen Ke's art," curator Zhu Zhu said.

Zhu said the "you" in the name has another important meaning for Chen: "It stands for art, which Chen sees as a fatal choice, and refers to artists who have inspired Chen, such as Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh, American photographer Cindy Sherman and Japanese artist Yoshitomo Nara."

Chen's paintings are often compared to cartoons and remind viewers of Yoshitomo Nara, who is famous for his pastel-hued children's illustrations.

The first exhibition she participated in the capital was a group showing named "Next Station, Cartoon?" in which she was labeled by media as a "representative of 'the new cartoon generation.'"

But her frequently drawn female character conveys feelings both melancholic and sentimental.

"She is a reflection of the pain and loneliness of maturity," Chen said.

"Loneliness has been the biggest issue I hoped to explore and solve with my work, but I've found it is a basic problem that is unsolvable," She said. "Everyone is special and separate. You can hide loneliness by surrounding yourself with family and friends, but it is not something that can ever be erased."

Most recently, Chen spent a year summarizing her life for an autobiography. The book traces her childhood spent in her grandparents' home, her college years in Chongqing, her time as an exchange student in Kassel, Germany, and her first solo exhibition.

Her stories are retold in great details – the most impressive are accompanied by paintings.

For the exhibition, she brought back many of her childhood toys from Sichuan, like an old diary, photos, stickers and comic books from the 1980s. She also brought photos of Tongjiang, her small hometown in Sichuan, and of her campus in Chongqing.

"It is weird to write a memoir in your 30s, but I see it as a very important age. Confucius said 'people stand firm at 30,' and I want to sum up the last three decades. I also wanted to

Sum up a life in art

By Zhang Dongya

Chen Ke held her newest solo exhibition at Today Art Museum last Saturday.

The exhibition also celebrated the release of her autobiography, which has been praised as "arousing the collective memories of a generation."



4 Square Meters, an installation at the Today Art Museum

explore why I became an artist," she said.

One of the paintings, *Reading van Gogh at Night*, tells the story of one important decision she faced.

When entering college, Chen had to decide whether to study design or painting. She was attracted to oil painting, but anticipated an unstable future with few opportunities for work. At that time, she was reading a biography of Vincent van Gogh. Van Gogh's story touched her and strengthened her resolve to study painting.

Although one reviewer criticized Chen for failing to develop her style over the years, Chen said she believes she has always been changing.

"The best artist is one who can face his real self both honestly and bravely. The me of yesterday is different from the me of today. If it were otherwise, then life would be meaningless," she said.

With You – I'll Never Feel Lonely

Where: 1st Floor, No. 3 Building, Today Art Museum, Pingod Community, 32 Baizhuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 12, 10 am – 5 pm
Tel: 5876 0600-600



Youth's Life

Photos provided by Star Gallery



Frog City



With You – I'll Never Feel Lonely
By Chen Ke, 283pp, China Youth Publishing Group, 39 yuan

Photo by Mockingbird

“People need and want to know what is happening in the other world.”



First impressions of rural Germany



Hoesch used to be the biggest factory in Dortmund.



Fu Qiong (right) films two German students who are studying Chinese.



In Dortmund, most of the young men are obsessed with soccer.



Soccer fans in Dortmund



There are many Turkish immigrants in Dortmund.

Photos provided by Fu Qiong

By Wu Tong

After years of directing historical documentaries, the last place Fu Qiong expected to find herself was stranded in a foreign country with only her digital video recorder.

But the alien feeling of being alone in the remote German town of Dortmund helped her see the area with new eyes and close the more than 7,000 kilometer distance using her lens.

If you asked an average person to tell you about Germany's Ruhr region, he or she would probably mention something about soccer and coal.

But in *Faces: Dortmund*, director Fu Qiong tries to give the city a new image. The film, hailed by critics as "a good-humored portrait of a town — seen from the perspective of a Chinese woman," was screened by Moma Boradway Cinema last Saturday.

"In 2009, the International Women's Film Festival wanted a director who had never been to Dortmund to shoot a documentary about the city in 20 days," Fu said. She didn't hesitate to volunteer.

However, the project was anything but smooth.

When Fu arrived, she learned she would not be provided with a film crew or anything other than a digital video recorder. To make matters worse, her fluent Chinese and conversational English were completely lost on the residents of Dortmund, most of whom only spoke German.

With nobody to talk to, Fu wandered the streets searching for something worth recording. The compressed time frame forced her to give up her plans to write a script.

"Everything in the city was new to me, so I decided to just put together everything I saw and heard during the 20 days," Fu said.

But that natural way to arrange the documentary wowed viewers and left them with a fresh impression of the European city. Fu said the project was difficult, but a lot of fun.

Once, when she was filming on the street, an old man came up to her and started staring at her camera.

"He said a lot of stuff in German

that I totally didn't understand. To be polite, I explained to him what I was doing in English. But it seemed neither of us quite understood," Fu said.

"We smiled to each other, he left and I kept filming. It seemed like we understood each other in our hearts."

Fu said she could also see that Chinese is having increasing influence in the Ruhr region. "I could hardly believe when I heard there was a school in Dortmund teaching Chinese," she said. She visited that school and met some of the students who said they hoped to work abroad one day.

"I was so pleased when I saw this," Fu said. "Before this trip, I wouldn't have believed there was a group of kids learning Chinese in Dortmund. I even saw a Chinese newspaper on a newsstand there."

She attributed the influence to the 2008 Olympic Games.

"When they heard I was from China, many of them asked me in English whether I had seen the 2008 Beijing Olympics," Fu said. "I felt like these things went beyond borders."

Her 20 days left Fu too many memories to depict in her 37-minute documentary.

"I wish there had been someone with me in Dortmund to film me while I was working. I wanted to save every memory of my time there," Fu said.

The Dortmund experience has inspired Fu to make another attempt at bridging cultures. On September 2010, Fu went to Ottawa, Canada to film a story in its Chinatown.

"I think people all over the world need and want to know what is happening somewhere thousands of kilometers away," she said.

Wake up your skin

By Annie Wei

Beijing's winter and spring are both tough seasons for the skin, turning them dry, itchy and sensitive, especially when the temperature changes.

It's time for some extra care.

For luxury pampering, get a facial at a professional salon. Ritz-Carlton's spa uses Pevonia, an imported professional skincare line made of natural ingredients from the US, particularly marine plants. The spa has a dozen kinds of treatments starting from 900 yuan for an hour.

"I like the smell of Pevonia. Its strong pineapple scent reminds you of tropical areas and boosts your energy," said Cao Wei, an event planner.

Unlike many beauty salons, the five-star hotel's treatment delivers consistently quality service, and the staff won't peddle products.

But for people who prefer a low-cost treatment, An Xu, an online advertising executive, said she scouted a great spot for body exfoliation: getting rid of dead skin cells and allowing your skin to absorb nutrients and moisture.

"The environment is for the working class, really," An said. For 48 yuan, one can enjoy a milk or salt full-body exfoliation.

"I'd like to pay an extra few kuai and add a raw egg in the milk option," An said. After rubbing your back, the masseuse will mix milk and egg into a paste and spread it over your body. After showering, your skin will feel smooth as silk.

"Just bring your own bottle of organic milk and an egg if you're

worried about the quality of their ingredients," An said.

Those who want to go the extra step should also wear a moisturizing skin mask every morning and night and apply body lotion after showering every day.

The Ritz-Carlton Spa Beijing

Where: The Ritz-Carlton, China

Central Place, 83A Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: RSVP

Tel: 5908 8942

48 yuan body exfoliation

Where: Basement gym of Shenggu Jiayuan, Anzhenqiao, Beishanhan Lu, Xicheng District

Open: 10 am - 9 pm



Photos provided by The Ritz-Carlton Spa Beijing

The latest in-style fashion

By Annie Wei

As proven at the latest Fashion Week, lace, floral prints, bold colors and a little bit of Chinese elements are "in."

These international brands might not be affordable for everyone, but don't worry, Zara will soon carry similar trends through its outlets.

Zara

Where: South building, The Place, 9 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 10 pm

Tel: 6587 1345



From Emmanuel Ungaro



From Viktor & Rolf



From Valentino



From Cacharel

CFP Photos

Old restaurant made new with renovations

By Annie Wei

Prior to 2008, Beijing didn't have nearly as many modern and nice restaurants as it does now, meaning quality places like Transit and Luce had an easy time winning the trust of many in the foreign community.

But all things change. Transit's old location at Xingfu Yicun is now a neighborhood garbage disposal. The restaurant's new location is now Village North.

Luce, meanwhile, has stayed around the Drum and Bell Tower neighborhood, with a renovated interior and new menu.



Sichuan snacks, starting at 45 yuan



Fried vegetables, 65 yuan

Photos by Liu Miumiu/CFP

Transit – a different Sichuan taste

"Transit might not have the flavors that people associate with Sichuan," said co-owner Catalin Theodor Ichim, a Romanian man who has lived in Beijing for a decade.

When Ichim and his friends decided to open Transit in 2002, they visited Sichuan Province and talked with residents about what distinguished real Sichuan food. Locals said that before the 1950s, Sichuan food was not as spicy or mouth-numbing as today.

We recommend the classic shui-zhuyu (258 yuan), sea bass fillets, oyster mushrooms in sea salt, hot chili peppers and prickly ash peppers-infused oil. The fillet is soft and tender. More importantly, it has a unique type of spiciness suitable even for people who don't like spicy.

We also enjoyed its stir-fried chili and asparagus lettuce (68 yuan). We particularly like its special flavor and lemongrass aroma.

The new Transit has kept some signature dishes like eggplant with minced pork (68 yuan) and slow-braised red-bill duck breast in yellow bean sauce (95 yuan). The duck, how-

ever, wasn't as good as expected, as it was stuffy and dry.

People who like dry-fried green beans, can try its bitter melon version at 65 yuan.

The desserts were good: golden caramel threads over sticky rice red bean cakes (138 yuan) and iced passion fruit yogurt stuffed in lychee (78 yuan). Both can be shared by several diners.

Compared to the average Sichuan restaurant, Transit is on the expensive side, but the restaurant sources their own organic vegetables and free-range chicken from the city's suburbs.

The wine is good as well, including Wild River Cabernet Sauvignon, Yarra Valley, Victoria, Australia 2007 at 60 yuan per glass.

The new Transit's interior is delicately traditional with a contemporary twist. All plates, bowls and wine glasses were picked with care.

Transit

Where: N4-36/37 Sanlitun Village North (above the Diesel store), 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6417 9090



Transit offers modern Sichuan cuisine.

Photo provided by Baidu.com



Risotto, starting from 58 yuan

Luce – Simple and affordable Italian

As the weather warms, more people will head for the hutong and look for small and charming eateries. Luce should be an easy find.

For years, Luce has offered an intimate environment with decent and inexpensive food. Because of its low-key look, many tourists pass right by.

Its Sunday brunch used to feature a steak that only cost 40 yuan, but inflation has necessitated a menu update, along with price increases.

Salads cost from 38 to 58 yuan, pasta starts from 50 yuan and main dishes start at 78 yuan.

We ordered a healthy salad (38 yuan) of 21 kinds of vegetables, fruits and nuts, with Parmesan cheese and honey vinegar sauce; Italian risotto (58 yuan), creamy, delicious except a bit too salty and the lamb (118 yuan), which highly recommended with four pieces of fat and tender meat.

Its lunch set menu is like none other, costing 35, 45 or 55 yuan. The 35 yuan menu includes sandwich, salad and coffee with nice hutong view outside.

The only drawback is the lighting at night was too dim that some cannot read the menu.

The restaurant has a nice balcony, suitable for hosting parties.

Luce

Where: 138 Jiugulou Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: for kitchen, 2 pm – midnight; for bar, 2 pm – 2 am Monday to Thursday; 2 pm – 4 am from Friday to Sunday

Tel: 8402 4417



Cocktails, starting from 35 yuan



Lamb, 118 yuan



Salad, starting from 38 yuan

Photos by Yu Tingmei

Dining

Healthy and energetic tofu

Start your spring dining experience with exciting dishes prepared by the master chefs of Li Jing Xuan using fresh tofu. Indulge yourself in healthy delights with braised tofu and shark fin in saffron sauce and steamed tofu. Tofu is low in calories, high in protein, low in fat and high in iron and calcium, making it a great ingredient for healthy dishes.

Where: Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 8522 1888
Email: reservation.beijing@regenthotels.com



Fresh asparagus in spring

What better way to celebrate spring than with delectable asparagus dishes? Refresh yourself with a stunning menu prepared by Chef Mario, featuring dishes such as slow poached organic eggs, asparagus, black truffles and Parmesan sauce.

Great wines will be paired with the dishes for some dazzling combinations.

Where: Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 8522 1789
Email: reservation.beijing@regenthotels.com

Kids

Kids, dancers needed for Broadway musical audition

Children between the ages of 5 and 15 who can sing or dance are needed for a Broadway production coming to Beijing this July.

The event will require three rehearsals each week, and the production will involve between six to nine performances per week. Some roles will require speaking, singing or dancing.

The show has been confirmed a famous Chinese singer as the headliner.

The director and casting manager will hold auditions on the weekends of March 17 and 18 and March 24 and 25. Pay ranges from \$500 to \$1,000 per show and 50 yuan per hour of rehearsal.

If qualified, please send a resume and current photo to Boris at BeijingDanceJobs@gmail.com to receive audition details. Phone calls will not be accepted.

Workshop

Exploring social trends: Chinese youth on the Web

Do you know which websites are popular among young Chinese Internet users? Come to Monday's workshop to learn about popular Web trends to make your Chinese Internet use more interesting.

Reservations are required.

Where: Culture Yard, Shique Hutong, Beixinqiao, Dongcheng District (Subway Line 5, Beixinqiao Station, Exit C)

When: March 12

Cost: 40 yuan

Tel: 8404 4166

Email: contact@cultureyard.net

Mahjong sessions

Mahjong is a game of skill, tactics and calculation that many locals enjoy playing on the street, in the homes or in Mahjong tea houses.

Rules for the game tend to vary from region to region, but the basics are easy to learn and offer many possibilities for strategy.

Culture Yard is teaching Mahjong on weekdays in afternoon sessions.

Only 12 seats are available. Reservations are required.

When: March 14 and 21, 1-4 pm

Where: Culture Yard, Shique Hutong, Beixinqiao, Dongcheng District (Subway Line 5, Beixinqiao Station, Exit C)

Cost: 200 yuan per session (2 courses)

Tel: 8404 4166

Email: workshop@cultureyard.net

Rent

Great 2-bed, 2-bath apartment in Sanlitun Soho

This brand new 150-square-meter apartment has convenient access to mass transportation and shopping at The Village. It is also near Workers' Stadium.

The apartment has two bedrooms, two bathrooms and access to adequate sunlight. It comes fully furnished.

It is close to Chaoyang Hospital, Sanlitun Village, the Pacific Center and other malls, as well as numerous restaurants, banks, schools and Sanlitun Bar Street.



Rent: 18,000 yuan per month
Contact: kevinandyou@163.com

Job

English teachers wanted at international kindergarten

English teachers are needed at International English Kindergarten of Beijing. The work week is Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, including office hours. Teachers will be responsible for students between the ages of 2 and 6.

International English Kindergarten of Beijing is located near Guozhan Station on Line 15 of the subway. It teaches math, drama, art, music and global leadership.

The position pays between 6,000 to 8,000 yuan per month, with a 2,000-yuan housing allowance, medical insurance and visa processing. Teachers who complete a one-year contract can get reimbursement for a 6,000-yuan air ticket. There is paid leave during Chinese holidays and sick days.

Teachers who complete a one-year contract at the school will be eligible for a TESL Certificate.

To apply for the position, send your resume, a recent photograph and copies of your passport and university diploma to aodengedu@hotmail.com.

Skype: aodengedu QQ: 1603514681

Tel: 3146022090

Hotel



Indonesian Delegation chooses Grand Millennium Beijing

Grand Millennium Beijing hosted the Indonesian Delegation led by H. E. Air Marshall Djoko Suyanto, the coordinating minister of Political, Legal and Security of The Republic of Indonesia, China's Ambassador to Indonesia, the deputy director-generals of the Department of Asian Affairs of MFA, the deputy director-generals of the Protocol Department of MFA and other Indonesian officials.



Singaporean Ambassador holds farewell dinner

The Grand Millennium Beijing was honored to organize and cater the farewell dinner for Singaporean Ambassador Chin Siat Yoon. The event was arranged by SINGCHAM and attended by 200 Singaporeans and their Chinese friends.

The ambassador and his wife served in Beijing for 14 years. Chin was also the valued patron of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in China.

(By Jackie Zhang)



Nightlife All That Blues

Zhang Xiaosong, a harmonica player in Big John Blues Band, is an icon of Chinese blues. Apart from founding the country's first harmonica teaching website, Zhang was the first to lecture on the subject at Chinese universities. At this performance, he will be joined by Peter

Murchison, an American singer and guitarist who also plays the slide guitar and mandolin.

Where: 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9-11:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6401 5269

Fri, Mar. 9

Sat, Mar. 10

Documentary Man On Wire

On August 7, 1974, a young Frenchman named Philippe Petit illegally stepped out onto a wire rigged between the New York World Trade Center's twin towers. After dancing for nearly an hour on the wire, he was arrested, taken for psychological evaluation and jailed. This extraordinary documentary incorporates Petit's personal footage to show how he overcame seemingly insurmountable challenges to achieve the artistic crime of the century.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: 7-9 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 6225 4422

Exhibition The charming qipao

The stylish and often tight-fitting qipao was created in the 1920s in Shanghai and was made fashionable by socialites and upper-class women. Slender and form-fitting, with a high cut, it was different from traditional qipao – a sign of development of Chinese society and the liberation of women.

The qipao displayed in this exhibition tell the story of this remarkable dress through the years.

Where: The Chinese Museum of Women and Children, 13 Jianguomen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Daily until March 27, 10 am – 4 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 13911135537



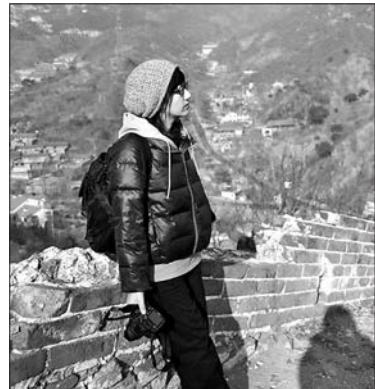
Sun, Mar. 11

Culture Salon Yi Lijing: To Remeasure every life

Yi Lijing is the editor *Southern People Weekly* and has experience covering finance, social news and culture. His book, *Measure*, is a collection of interviews between himself and celeb-

rities. Yi will talk about his work at this salon and share insights about the people he covers.

Where: Rs-16, 11 Solana, 6 Yard Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 3-5 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5905 6973



Mon, Mar. 12



Peking Opera The Classical Revolutionary Operas Concert

Created during the Cultural Revolution, some of these operas and ballets, namely *The Red Lantern*, *Shajia Village*, *Praise of Dragon River*, *On the Dock*, *Red Detachment of Women* and *White-Haired Girl*, have become

classics. This concert will present selections of several of these "revolutionary operas."

Where: Chang'an Grand Theater, 7 Jianguomen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 7:30-11:30 pm
Admission: 20-180 yuan
Tel: 6406 3993

Thu, Mar. 15

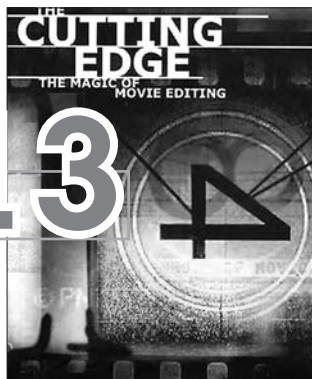
Exhibition The Retrospective of Agnès Varda: The Beach of Agnès Varda

Agnès Varda's movies, photographs and installations focus on realism and feminist issues. Her exhibition will be divided into five parts.

Where: CAFA Art Museum of China Central Academy of Fine Arts, 8 Huajiadi Nan Jie, Chaoyang District
When: Daily except Monday, until April 18, 2-5:30 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 6477 1575



Tue, Mar. 13



Documentary The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing

A documentary directed by Wendy Apple, this 2004 film takes viewers inside the world of film editors. In addition to interviews with respected and award-winning editors, the movie offers clips from some of the most memorable films to demonstrate the art of editing. A Q-and-A session will follow.

Where: No. 3 Club, 43 Bei Sanhuan Xi Lu, Haidian District
When: 7:30-10 pm
Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8211 5288

Wed, Mar. 14

Movie The Butterfly

An old man seeks out a particular butterfly because it was the favorite of his deceased son. This film was called "an exceptionally satisfying film of much grace and beauty" by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Where: 4-11, 315 Shaoyaoju Bei Li, Chaoyang District
When: 7:30-10 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 15210322601

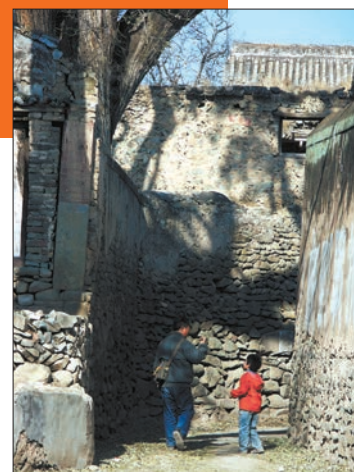
(By Zhang Yuting)



Experience the famous 'tofu meal' at Liugou village

By Wu Hao

Located in Yanqing County, Liugou village has long been an attraction for city-folk seeking to escape from pollution and traffic in favor of something fresh and nutritious: namely, the "tofu meal," a traditional delight that was revived in 2003.



Villager's courtyard

Photos by Cissy

About 90 kilometers from downtown Beijing, Liugou village lies in southeast Yanqing County with the Great Wall section of Juyong Pass to its south and Badaling to its southwest.

Liugou was often a battlefield during the Song and Liao dynasties, so remains of walls, gates and ancient temples can be found around the village. It's said that in the early years of the village, standing on Mount Yanyu, Liugou was the shape of a phoenix stretching its wings – which is why Liugou is also called the "Phoenix Ancient City."

The village's north gate exemplifies the style and features of this ancient village. The gate remains splendid, with well-bedded bricks and a wide opening through which cars can pass.

The village also has many ruined temples. It's said that there were 20 temples in the past, though only the three main halls of Chenghuang Miao (Town God's Temple) remain. Walking around it, one can catch the fading colors of frescos on the walls.

A well in the village also attracts attention. According to a sign plate, the well was built in the early years after liberation by the China's People's Liberation Army. The wall inside the well is built from twisted wood, giving it its name: Panmu. The well water is limpid and sweet, making it

perfect for cooking tofu.

It's on the deliciousness of its "tofu meal" that Liugou has gained renown. Hundreds of thousands of visitors go every year for the tofu, and villagers proudly advertise their speciality.

Almost every household serves its version of the tofu meal, though prices vary.

The clay braziers to cook the tofu were originally used for warming one's hands. Later, villagers came up with the idea of putting a casserole of tofu, noodles, cabbage and pork inside the pan.

The tradition almost died out before the Liugou government brought it back for a folk tourism event in 2003. Villagers altered the size of the traditional brazier pot to cook for 10 people at a time.

The launching of the "brazier pot, tofu meal" folk festival not only saved a tradition but also injected some much-needed cash flow into villagers' hands.

Ordering is unnecessary at most places in Liugou – in fact, menus are practically unheard of. Locals will welcome you by setting down a variety of dishes as soon as you sit.

The tofu meal consists of "three colors": white soybean tofu, said to beautify the skin; black-bean tofu for nourishing the kidneys; and mung bean tofu for clearing away pathogenic heat.

Travel information

Where: Liugou Village, Jingjiahuang Town, Yanqing County
Getting there: Take Bus 919 from Deshengmen to Nanlaiying in Yanqing, then change to Bus 920 to Liugou. Or take S2 train from Beijing North Railway station to Yanqing (6 yuan), then take a taxi to Liugou.

Accommodations: Lodging at a villager's house costs 15 to 80 yuan per person

Cost of tofu meal: 19-25 yuan

Tel: 8117 2699

Notes: There is a market in the village where visitors can buy local specialties.

Nearby sites: Badaling Great Wall, Badaling ski resort and Longqing Gorge.

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